

step.

11. The method according to claim 9, wherein said pellets are exposed to said pressure for a period of time not exceeding one minute, said drying step comprising exposure of said pellets to a second pressure, said second pressure being lower than ambient pressure, said drying step further comprising drying at a temperature below 100 degrees Celsius.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein said pressure and said second pressure are different from each other.

13. The method according to claim 9, said drying step comprising an oil bath acting as a deep-frying treatment.

14/ A plant for manufacturing feed pellets said plant comprising:

A. a pelletizing machine constructed and arranged for shaping said pellets;

B. a pellet chamber adjacent to and downstream from said pelletizing machine, said pellet chamber having an outlet, said pellet chamber being constructed and arranged to expose said pellets to a pressure lower than ambient pressure; and

C. a tank containing oil, said tank being in communication with said outlet, said tank comprising a deep-frying container, said tank being constructed and arranged to expose said pellets to a second pressure lower than ambient pressure.

15. The plant according to claim 14, wherein said pressure is between 100 and 800 millibars.

16. The plant according to claim 14, wherein said second pressure is between 100 and 800 millibars.

17. The plant according to claim 14, wherein said pressure and said second pressure are different from each other.

18. The plant according to claim 14, further comprising a lock body between said pellet chamber and said tank.

19. The plant according to claim 18, wherein said lock body rotates, said lock body being constructed and arranged to move pellets out of said pellet chamber.

5577646664

A¹⁸

20. The plant according to claim 18, said pellet chamber comprising a first vacuum pump, said first vacuum pump constructed and arranged to maintain said pellet chamber at said pressure lower than said ambient pressure, said tank comprising a second vacuum pump, said second vacuum pump constructed and arranged to maintain said second pressure lower than said ambient pressure.

21. The plant according to claim 20, wherein said second pressure is different from said pressure.

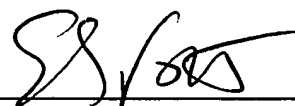
22. The plant according to claim 21, wherein said second pressure is lower than said pressure.

Applicant respectfully requests entry and consideration of the amendments to the specification and the addition of new claims herein. Applicant has attached hereto a marked-up version of the specification for the convenience of the Examiner as entitled "Marked-Up Version".

Respectfully submitted,

VIDAS, ARRETT & STEINKRAUS

Date: September 21, 2001

By: 
Edwin E. Voigt II, Esq.
Registration No.: 36,042

6109 Blue Circle Drive, Suite 2000
Minnetonka, MN 55343-9185
Telephone: (952) 563-3000
Facsimile: (952) 563-3001
F:\WPWORK\EEV\10148AMD.919